Why We Did This Review

Technology now affects most areas of government. While technology can facilitate quicker, more accurate and reliable service, it also introduces new risks. Understanding the County's Information Technology (IT) risks helps County leadership in determining where to allocate limited resources.

The objective of this review was to identify significant County IT risks by conducting a self-reported IT inventory of key agency applications, systems, initiatives, and data sensitivity. We conducted this review as part of our FY 2011 Board-approved audit plan.

What We Concluded

- Effective enterprise-wide privacy programs would not only protect the County's data but also its business.

- Stronger County IT Governance would improve IT alignment within the organization and lead to more successful, useful systems.

- Some aging County systems are becoming less efficient at enabling management to make timely and accurate decisions.

Countywide IT Inventory
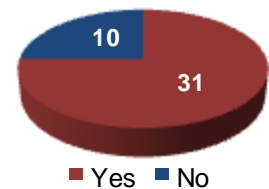
Key Information Technology Risks

What We Found

We identified three significant County IT risks by inventorying several critical applications and key system information via self-reported IT surveys and interviews with selected agencies. The information obtained during this review will be used in future audit planning. The three identified Countywide IT risks are shown below.

Inadequate Data Privacy Controls

76% of the participating County agencies report collecting and maintaining sensitive information. Inadequate data privacy controls can result in data breaches, costly remediation requirements, and tarnished reputation.

Agencies Maintaining Sensitive Personal Data

10

31

■ Yes ■ No

Weak IT Governance Processes

Inadequate IT Governance, identified in our June 2009 Countywide Information Technology Governance Review, continues to be a significant County risk. Weak IT governance processes can result in IT plans that do not align with the County's overall strategic plan, leading to uncontrolled expenditures and failed or subpar systems.

"IT governance does not occur spontaneously; rather it is designed and implemented consciously." (GFOA)

Aging IT Systems

Survey responses indicate that 51 (25%) of the County's applications are over 10 years old. Several are much older, including the County's financial system, treasurer's system, and the jail management system. Aging IT systems relied upon by users for key business processes may not perform efficiently.

Software Applications Grouped by Start-Up Dates

51

67

84

■ 2006-10 ■ 2001-05 ■ 1980-2000
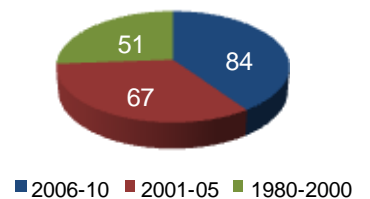
We appreciate the cooperation we received from County agencies while conducting our surveys and interviews.

"Do the Right Things Right!"   ***Maricopa County Internal Audit Department***